

THE MAVERICK BULL

The Newsletter of the Maverick Grotto

Volume 17, Issue 7

July 2004



2004 TSA Convention

Maverick Grotto Information

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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of the Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of the National Speleological Society (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art, photographs, and other two- and three-dimensional goodies. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed stamped envelope should accompany it.

Reprinting Articles: Internal organizations of the National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to the author as stated in the byline) first appearing in the Maverick Bull if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to the editor at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor of the Maverick Bull at the address herein.

Exchanges: The Maverick Grotto will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact the editor.

Complimentary Newsletters: The Maverick Grotto will provide complimentary newsletters to persons or organizations that provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Maverick Grotto will provide one free issue to persons interested in becoming members.

Subscription Rates: Subscription rates are \$15 per year for nonmembers and free for members.

Membership Policy: Any individual with interests, beliefs, and actions consistent with the purposes of the Maverick Grotto and the National Speleological Society is eligible for membership. Acceptance of new members is based on payment of dues and a mandatory three-trip requirement with at least three different grotto members. These three members shall act as sponsors. At least one sponsor must attend the meeting at which the membership vote is taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance.

Meetings: Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at Bodacious BBQ, 1206 E. Division St., Arlington. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

Carbide: Currently carbide is unavailable.

Library: Support your grotto library. Russell Hill is accepting books, magazines, and videos related to caves and caving for our library. Thanks to Russell for his efforts in transporting the library collection to meetings.

Cave Rescue

Call collect (512) 686-0234

Photo Credits

Front cover: Charles Fromén. See page 7 for identification of 2004 TSA Convention participants.

Page 4 & 5: Mark Gee

Page 6: Scott Boyd

Back cover: Photographer is unknown, photo ca. 1960. Can you recognize these cavers? See TSS Open House article on Page 7 for more info.

Visit Our NSS Award-Winning Web Site! --see page 4 of this newsletter--

Butch has done an excellent job at constructing the grotto web site and keeping it up-to-date. You'll find information about getting into caving, trip photos and the PDF version of this newsletter (with color photos!):

maverickgrotto.org

**Next meeting, July 13th, 7p.m.
Bodacious BBQ
1206 E. Division St.
Arlington, TX 76011
(817) 860-4248**

Program: Richland Springs Cavern video, reproduced and distributed for the TSS by Keith Heuss. Aimee Beveridge posted this on CaveTex: "Richland Springs Cavern was a commercial cave during the 20's in San Saba County that failed due to the depression. It was made a show cave again in 1951, but failed once again. The cave has been closed to cavers since it was discovered. In the early 1990's David Feemster and Lynn Barton were granted entry into the cave and made this 22-minute video. They got in because Lynn was a minister of the Presbyterian church in San Saba and the owner of the cave was a member of the Congregation. The cave has had an almost magical charm and is rumored to be a spectacular cave, mainly due to the fact that it has been closed. Take a look at the video and judge for yourself."

Be sure to show up at 7 p.m., as we will start the program before the business meeting.

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June Meeting Minutes

submitted by Scott Boyd

The Maverick Grotto met June 8th at Bodacious BBQ, on E. Division St. in Arlington. Eighteen members and four visitors attended this month's meeting.

Program: Bill Steele showed lots of digital photos and talked about his 18-day trip on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, which he took this past spring.

Reports from Officers:

Vice-Chairman: Mark announced that Diana Tomchick would be presenting the program next month.

Treasurer: Sharon reported that she didn't get the account balanced this month, but said that the grotto has about \$300 less than last month, due to the donation made to the TCMA Acquisition Fund for Deep and Punkin Caves.

Newsletter Editor: Diana passed out a sheet detailing the newsletter expenses and annual revenues, and talked a bit about it as it concerns the newsletter. She also announced that the July newsletter deadline would be moved up a few days, since she is going out of town at the end of June. The deadline will be posted in an email to the grotto mailing list.

Old Business: It was announced that the donation for the TCMA Acquisition Fund for Deep and Punkin Caves is up to \$300, and donations are still being accepted. Butch Fralia suggested that we get receipts for the donations to the TCMA fund, since the TCMA is a non-profit organization, and the Maverick Grotto is not.

New Business: Butch reported on his ongoing editing of all the video footage that was taped during the TSA Convention. Diana asked if anyone in the Grotto was interested in doing joint projects with NTSS & COG. Most members were interested, so she will work more on that when she can. A raffle was held, with the prize being half of the money collected. Kris Megahan won the raffle, and wanted a TSA bat-sticker instead, so the grotto got to keep all the money raised in the raffle.

Trip reports and Trip Announcements: Rafal Kedzierski reported on a caving trip he went on during the weekend of the TSA Convention. He and others did some ridge walking on the land that is projected to be above Three Whirlpool Cave, looking for a back entrance to the cave. Milo Marks mentioned that anyone wanting to go on this weekend's trip to the Carlsbad area should see him after the meeting.

Caving Events Calendar

Second Saturday of every month Hilltop Project (Capitan, NM): Ridge walking and digging in windy blowholes on USFS and BLM lands, about 5 miles south of Fort Stanton Cave, NM. Meet for Cave Diggers Breakfast on Saturday between 7:30 to 8 a.m. at the Smokey Bear Restaurant in Capitan. **Contacts:** Lee Skinner (505) 293-5723 skinner@thuntek.net or Dick Venters (505)437-3712 cavedigger@msn.com

July 23-25 High Guads Restoration Project (New Mexico): On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. **Contacts:** Susan Herpin or Jennifer

Foote highguads@yahoo.com

Aug 01-06 Restoration Field Camp (Mammoth Cave National Park, KY): Camp participants will remove old wooden walkways, electrical cable, and lights and complete other conservation tasks. This is a great way to see parts of Mammoth Cave no longer open to the public. Trips to nearby caves can also be arranged. Camping or bunkhouse accommodations and meals will be provided (for a small fee). **Contact:** Roy Vanhoozer rvanhoo@aol.com

Aug 01-07 Fifth National Cave Gating Workshop (Scottsboro, AL): Hands-on gate building experience under the supervision of qualified instructors from various organizations. **Contact:** Jim Kennedy (512) 327-9721 jkennedy@batcon.org

Aug 07-08 GypKaP (Carlsbad area, NM): Long-running cave survey project in the gypsum plain of southern New Mexico. **Contact:** Blake Jordan (505) 260-1096 blandevoid@comcast.net

Aug 21 EspeleoCoahuila 2004 (Saltillo, Mexico): The first-ever caving event dedicated to speleology in Coahuila, sponsored by the Asociación Coahuilense de Espeleología AC. It will be similar to a TSA Convention, with presentations throughout the day. **Contact:** Peter Sprouse peter@purificacion.org

Sep 04-06 Labor Day Regional, Southwest Region (Black Range, NM): There should be opportunities for ridge walking, surveying and restoration. Stay tuned for details. **Contact:** S. Peerman gypcaver@aol.com

Sept 25-26 GypKaP (Carlsbad area, NM): Long-running cave survey project in the gypsum plain of southern New Mexico. **Contact:** Blake Jordan (505) 260-1096 blandevoid@comcast.net

Oct 04-09 Carlsbad Caverns Lint Camp (New Mexico): Annual restoration project at Carlsbad Caverns. **Contact:** Pat Jablonsky (307) 467-5404 patjabo@trib.com

Oct 22-24 Texas Cavers' Reunion (Flat Creek Ranch): The annual get-together returns to this popular Blanco County site. **Contact:** Andy Grubbs grubbsi@centurytelnet

Oct 30-31 Powell's Cave (Powell's Ranch, Menard, TX): Come see the second longest cave in Texas! Cavers of all skill and experience levels welcome. A cave sketching workshop sponsored by the Texas Speleological Survey may take place in Powell's Cave this weekend, stay tuned for details. **Contacts:** Terry Holsinger (512) 443-4241 trhli@sprynet.com Jerry Atkinson (281) 360-2244 JerryAtkin@aol.com

Nov 21-27 Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon (Mexico): Survey and mapping project over Thanksgiving week. **Contact:** Jerry Fant jerryfant@worldnet.att.net

Editor's Notes

I've been editor of the newsletter for almost two years now, and it's been a lot of fun. Recently I've been asked if I would help edit some publications that have larger circulations than the *Maverick Bull*, and I'm seriously considering these requests. If I accept one of these positions, I will no longer have the time for this newsletter. Now's your chance to take over the job! Anyone who is interested should contact me either by email Diana.Tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu or at the next grotto meeting.

Maverick Grotto Web Site Wins NSS Award!

The Maverick Grotto web site received the NSS Web Page Award for April-June 2004. The NSS accepts nominations from Internal Organizations on a quarterly basis for this award, and a web page may only win once in a calendar year. A maximum of two awards may be given quarterly. The judging of the web site is based on a published set of criteria, as outlined in the email message sent to Butch (see below).

Congratulations Butch!

Dear Butch,

Congratulations! Your web page has been selected as one of the NSS Web Page Award winners for April-June 2004. The other winning page was Dayton Underground Grotto. You may display the distinctive NSS Web Page Award icon (attached) permanently on your site.

The judges evaluated your page on the following criteria: **APPEARANCE.** Is the page clean, crisp, easy on the eye, uncluttered and well organized? Are pictures, text and graphics clear and easy to read?

CURRENCY. Is the page kept current? Are contacts available and current? When was the last time the page was updated? Is old information removed from the page?

INFORMATION. Is frequently requested information about the organization easy to find by the visitor and prospective member? Is it easy to navigate around the page? Are links well defined and is contact and meeting information readily available without having to click on multiple links?

RESPONSIBLE CAVING. Does the page reflect safe and responsible caving? Do photos show cavers with proper gear? Does the page follow the NSS' conservation policy?

CAVER APPEAL. From a caver's perspective, is the page enjoyable to look at?

Again, congratulations on your selection. Your page is showcased on the NSS Web Page Award home page at <http://www.caves.org/webawards>

Sincerely,

Mike Hood, Chairman, NSS Web Page Awards Subcommittee of the Information Technology Committee

New Barb MacLeod CD for Sale as TCMA Fundraiser, Buy a Copy Now!

Famed cave balladeer Barb MacLeod of Austin gave a musical concert at the May 22nd TSA convention, and her performance was recorded by Woodrow Thomas. The recording is soon to be available on CD for only \$10. Proceeds will go to the Texas Cave Management Association toward the purchase of the Punkin and Deep Cave property. CDs should be ready to go and shipped in the next couple of weeks. The handful of people who have heard the CD have all enjoyed it, and of course if you were lucky enough to have been in the audience that night, well, you know you'll never forget it.

Contents of the CD:

Intro to Plastic Justrite
Plastic Justrite
Intro to Histoplasmosis
Histoplasmosis
Intro to Never Let a Reduuiid Take a Dump in Your Eye
Never Let a Reduuiid Take a Dump in Your Eye
Intro to Ode to Carbide
Ode to Carbide
Intro to Grand Kentucky Junction
Grand Kentucky Junction
Life is Like a Carbide Lantern
Intro to Forever on a Flowstone Möbius Strip
I Smell Bat Shit
Hollow Hills

Place your order by check made out to me, Bill Steele, P.O. Box 166332, Irving, TX 75016-6332. Orders made that way will be satisfied ASAP. If you want to pay by credit card or electronic check, go to the TCMA website and see if that way of paying is set up yet. It's supposed to be soon. Whenever it is set up and they tell me that you've paid, I'll send you a CD. But if you want to listen to it soon send me a check for a mere \$10 for an hour of caver entertainment.

Feel free to spread the word about the new Barb MacLeod CD.

Grotto TCMA Donations

Don't forget to bring your checkbook to the July meeting, as we are still collecting donations for the TCMA Punkin & Deep acquisition. Currently we have collected \$150 from individuals and matched that with \$150 in grotto funds. You may also mail checks (made out to TCMA) to Sharon Mastbrook, 3412 Walton Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76133.

Proyecto Espeleologico Sierra Oxmolon 2003, Part 1

San Luis Potosí, México Mark Gee, NSS #49625

For the second year in a row, I made the long, 904-mile drive across the border to Aquismón. Jerry and Enora Fant have been leading a caving project fifteen miles from Aquismón up into the mountains between the towns of La Brecha and La Laja. Along the ten miles of road between the two towns are many known caves and many others, unknown and undiscovered. The project's purpose is to locate, survey, map, study hydrology, and record the fauna found in the many caves. A good relationship has been established with the people of several of the local villages; although some are still suspicious, they continue to allow us in their caves. Jerry and others have sought donations of food, clothing, shoes, lanterns, school supplies, pencils, coloring books, and more to distribute among the local schools and villages. Some of the locals in some of the small towns that we haven't had much contact with are still a little skeptical, but those who have received donations and our friendship are very appreciative.

One large cave known as Cueva Linda, south of the town of La Laja, has been our main focus for the last two years. This is by far the largest cave found during the project, but other large caves have been found also. We expect to find many other caves. The area is covered with many large, deep, sinkholes. Almost every valley found is a closed valley with pits and caves at the bottom. The area is choked with thick growth and can only be penetrated with a machete and hard work. To find these small cave entrances in these large sinkholes is sometimes more luck than skill. We expect to be finding and exploring caves for many years.

This year's expedition started on November 21, 2003, when I found myself leaving my home at eight a.m. in the morning, headed to Jerry Fant's home near Wimberly. I got there a little early, but Jerry drove up soon after. We talked about the trip and I asked to see his map of Cueva Linda. Jerry was packing for the trip. I wasn't feeling well, so I lied down and took a nap. I slept several hours and woke up to find that Enora was now home. Jerry asked if I was hungry and I was, so we headed to town to eat at the Burger Shack. Jerry said that we were going to go by and help Ron Rutherford, another caver, install a camper on his truck. After several hours of modifications, we

mounted the camper. We left Ron's at eleven p.m. and back at Jerry's house I went right to bed, still not feeling well.

This year's trip got started at eight a.m. the next day when we left Jerry's house. Chris Vreeland and I were in my truck, and Jerry and Enora were riding with Ron. We crossed into Mexico at 2:15 p.m.



11-23-03 Human bones found in a small walled-in alcove in La Néné Cave, México.

It took only 51 minutes to cross the border at Pharr. The usual beautiful scenery entertained us. We arrived in Aquismón at 1:30 a.m. early Sunday morning. Again, as the year before, spent our first night in town at Mike Walsh's home.

Sometime Sunday morning, we left for the square to eat at Mary's Restaurant and do some shopping for supplies. I got some ice for the beer and we were soon headed up the mountain to our campsite south of La Laja. Arriving at camp, we opened up the fence and made a gate. Each of us began picking tent sites and setting up our camp. I set up my tent and dug a trench along the uphill side to divert water away if it was to rain (Note: It did rain hard later that week and my trench kept all but a teaspoon of rainwater out.). In a couple of hours camp was set up.

It was nice to be back in the tropical mountains. The weather was just right, partly cloudy and mild temperatures of 75 to 80 degrees. Later that same afternoon we left camp to go look at some known caves. Back down the road to Aquismón we made a left turn on a road that went to Aquacotta. We found a known cave that is used as a local water source. The cave is mostly round, about six feet in diameter, and the passage drops its entire length down to the water. It follows the dip of about 15 degrees for a length of about ninety meters. The water was high this day, but Jerry had seen it much lower with some continuing passage. I hope to survey this passage next year.

Next, we went to another cave used as a water source. La Néné is a long known cave and has been used as a water source for many decades. A four inch steel pipe that has been placed down into the cave and welded together follows along the road for several miles. This pipe takes water to several communities. Up in a small walled-in alcove above the cave entrance are several human bones. These bones, I was told, were collected down in the entrance to the cave, but were moved so the bones could be protected. Maybe these were burial bones or maybe sacrificial bones, it is not known.

We left the cave and headed down the trail towards our vehicles but discovered another trail that went into a deep, closed valley. Corn had been planted along the trail. We made our way through the corn and then the trail led back into the thick jungle growth. Almost immediately, we found a sinkhole on the right, five meters from the path. Ron walked up to a small karst ridge on the left, ten meters off the trail, and found a window in the rock to another deeper pit. He guessed it was over thirty meters deep. We GPSed the entrances and hoped to get back to these two pits later during the week. We left these pits and followed the path back through the cornfield and along the pipeline to our truck. As we headed back to camp, we stopped and gave several of the locals a ride in my truck.

MONDAY: Got up early, fixed breakfast and then did a little video around camp. Jerry and Ben were up early and had driven into Aquismón to talk to the local Mayor about permission to visit caves in the area. Enora wanted to drive to La Brecha, find Carlos, and give him some clothes to distribute among the people of La Brecha. Ron, Chris, Enora, and I loaded up in my truck.

The road was not too bad the first five miles, but it deteriorated after that to a very rough, rocky road. After arriving, I got my video cam and did some filming and took a few photos. The people were very happy to receive the few clothes that we had brought. We then drove back to camp. Carlos rode back with us. Juan was at camp clearing the vegetation and Carlos joined right in. They were enlarging our camping area. They cleared a large area so Ron moved his truck a little closer to camp.

Jerry and Ben arrived at camp and had brought with them a local man, whose name I didn't hear, who lived in Golondrinas. He was a very knowledgeable caver who knew many caves in the area. Ben and I took this young Mexican caver on into Golondrinas and on the way he showed us where several caves were along the way. After letting the young man out, Ben took me up to see this deep pit known as Sótano de las Golondrinas. It was the most fantastic pit that I had ever seen! Parrots were circling down inside the pit hundreds of feet below us. They circled up to us, and then flew out, to feed I suppose. Ben tossed a large rock into the pit (Note: nobody was on the bottom) and it took eleven seconds before we heard this thunderous echo reach us from the bottom.

After returning to camp, Jerry, Ron, Chris, and Ben were gearing up to go and rig Cueva Linda and take a few photos. They left for the cave at 4:15 p.m. and I don't know what time they returned because I had gone to bed after my dinner.

TUESDAY: Got up and dressed for caving, ate, and was ready to survey by 8:30 a.m. Sometime during the day Keith Heuss, Mike Walsh, and Barry stopped by camp. Mike and Keith had come down to work on a home that Mike is having built in Aquismón. Barry lives in town. He is living here after retiring from an oil and gas company in Florida. For some reason, nobody was in a hurry to go caving, but finally at three p.m. we left for Cueva Linda to survey.

At the cave, Chris and Enora checked two leads in the first few hundred feet of the right hand passage. Ron and I started our survey from the top of the first rope drop. Jerry and Ben checked a lead just below where our survey started. Peter Sprouse, who had visited the



11-26-03 Cueva Linda, a beautiful area above a side passage that I surveyed.

cave some years earlier, told Jerry that the lead went three hundred meters, but it only went thirty meters down and ended. Maybe Peter was talking about a different lead. Chris and Enora's lead didn't go either. Ron and I surveyed 205 meters and we were the last to exit the cave at nine p.m. Our three groups didn't survey much as a whole, but we did push the total survey of the cave over 1,000 meters, to a total of 1,046 meters. Jerry had put the survey data into the Walls cave survey computer program and we were able to look at the line plot of the entire cave and our most recent survey data. I've got to learn how to do that.

NEXT MONTH: More survey in Cueva Linda and in Cueva de Sonido Grande.

Carlsbad, NM, June 11-13, 2004

Scott Boyd

Participants: Scott Boyd, Tammy Cox & her son Lex, Milo Marks, Melissa Marzahn, Kristopher Megahan, Dennis & Sharon Welch

I was invited to travel to New Mexico with Dennis & Sharon Welch (and their chocolate lab Gadget), so I met up with them at their house at about 10 a.m. Friday. We loaded my gear into their motor home, and left at 10:30. We caught up with Tammy and Lex somewhere west of Ft. Worth on I-20, and the five of us caravanned to Carlsbad, where we met Milo in the Wal-Mart parking lot. We all followed Milo to the Parks Ranch public-use area, which is run by the BLM. We set up camp and ate dinner.

After dinner, we all went through Parks Ranch Cave, which has a fenced-in sinkhole entrance about fifty yards away from the camping area. Parks Ranch Cave is a gypsum cave so it's mostly horizontal conduits. When we came to the first T-intersection, we turned left. Along the way, Lex and I explored a small, tube-shaped passage that went for quite a long way, but we eventually turned back when it got too small. We continued on, and took a left at the next intersection. After much crawling and mostly stoop walking, we came upon another entrance, and exited the cave. By this time, it was dark outside, and we didn't know how far away we were from the campsite. Fortunately, Dennis had left the generator running on the motor home, so all we had to do was follow the sound back to camp. As it turned out, we were about 175 - 200 yards north of the campsite.

Later that night, Dennis and Milo went back to the cave to explore in the other direction at the first intersection. They returned about an hour later, saying they turned back after sloshing through water about 12 to 16 inches deep.

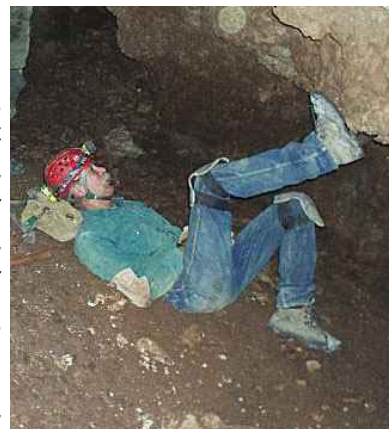
Kris and Melissa arrived Saturday morning, after spending Friday night in a motel in Carlsbad. They dropped off their camping stuff, and we all left for Wind Cave. Milo rigged a rope about 8 feet inside the entrance, and Kris rappelled down to the first level, right above where the 10 foot drop is located. I went next, after Milo explained the basic technique in rappelling with a micro-rack. It was my first time on rappel, and I think I did a pretty good job, as long as I remembered to keep my right hand on the rope. As I dropped through the opening to the level below Kris, the rope moved to the left, and I hit my back and shin on sharp edges and got some painful scrapes. After that, the rope was moved to the other opening, and everyone came down without any more injuries. We eventually found the room with Blood River, and the visitor register. When Milo took the register out of the plastic pipe, the pages were all ragged and falling apart. He started trying to read names on it, and the first name he saw was Phil Sanders, another Maverick

Grotto member. I looked at the register, and saw that the entry was from the time I went there with a group of five other cavers back in July 2001! I had a little note pad and pen with me, so I tore out a few pages and started a new register, and everyone entered their names. We spent almost nine hours in Wind, exploring everywhere, but we never made it all the way to the bottom. We all had a great time and lots of fun.

When we got back to where we had parked our vehicles at the top of the hill, Kris and Melissa had decided that they wanted to rent a motel room in Carlsbad. They especially wanted it for the shower! So they went on to Carlsbad, and

the rest of us returned to the campsite. Even though most everyone was exhausted, Dennis and Sharon grilled tasty hamburgers for everyone for dinner. After eating, Dennis and Milo once again decided they were going to explore another passage in Parks Ranch Cave. They returned within 30 minutes or so, as Milo was finally worn out.

After a good night's sleep, we were all awake and up by about 7 a.m. Sunday morning. Kris and Melissa arrived by about 8, and had decided they were going to go to Carlsbad Caverns. The rest of us headed to Doc Brito Cave. We found the entrance, unlocked the gate, and I was chosen to climb down first. Having never been in Doc Brito before, it took me quite awhile to climb down to the bottom, dragging my small pack with me, and checking for snakes along the way. Lex climbed down next, and after I guided him through the last small drop to the



Milo holding up the wall in Doc Brito



Scott Boyd with the group outside the entrance to Wind Cave

bottom of the entrance, I went on through a small crawlway leading to the main part of the cave. Once everyone was inside, Tammy decided that she and Lex were going to leave Doc Brito, and go to Carlsbad Caverns (I didn't catch the reason why they decided to leave). Milo stayed at the bottom of the entrance drop while they climbed out, and rejoined the three of us left in the cave. Dennis and Sharon went on ahead of me, and I lingered behind, taking photos of the numerous soda straws inside the main passageway of the cave. It looked as though a lot of water had flowed through the main passageway in the past, as there was damp silt-like dirt on the floor. Most of the cave walls were brown, and looked like they were coated with crusty, dry dirt. When they came to an area with lots of big breakdown, Dennis went into an upper passage, and Sharon took the main lower passage, and they met up farther back in the cave. Dennis attempted to climb down a wall to join her. When he put his foot and all his weight on

a protruding rock it broke, and he fell about four to five feet, and landed on his hip and side. Fortunately, he wasn't seriously hurt but got the wind knocked out of him, and gained some scrapes and cuts. While he recuperated, I went on exploring farther into the cave. I went around a sharp curve and into a hands-and-knees crawlway, which eventually restricted to a belly crawl. All the while, I was checking with Dennis and Sharon to see if they could still hear me, as I didn't want to get out of voice range, just in case something happened to me. I got to a point where I could see that the crawlway was about to open into a larger passage, and Dennis yelled out that they decided to leave. So I somehow managed to turn around in the narrow crawlway, and followed along behind them. After I exited Doc Brito, I found out that Dennis and Sharon had gone ahead to their Jeep. I locked the gate on the cave, and Milo and I hiked back up the hill to the vehicles.

We were supposed to go through Jernigan's Cave after Doc Brito, but since Dennis was hurt, they went back to the campsite. Milo and I went looking for the location of Jernigan's, even though we weren't going into it. We searched around in a nearby valley where he thought it might be, but we never found it. We then headed back to camp.

After returning to camp, the four of us that were left cleaned up, broke camp, said our goodbyes, and headed our separate ways. Dennis, Sharon, Gadget and I finally returned to their home at 11 p.m. Sunday night. Despite his fall inside Doc Brito, Dennis drove straight through from Carlsbad to Ft. Worth!

Overall, I had a great time, lots of fun, and really enjoyed and appreciated Dennis and Sharon's hospitality. And thanks Milo for organizing and leading the trip!



Kris on rappel in Wind

Newsletter Exchange Review, June & July 2004

R.D. Milhollin, NSS 29962

NSS News May 2004 (Vol. 62 No. 05)

Whoa, check the cover! This Chinese cave looks like something from the Purificación area in Mexico. I hate seeing this as I was planning on joining up with the photographer, Erin Lynch, to look into diving a few sumps in southern China this summer. Marianne Russo made a sketch on a bar napkin of a Chinese karst scene, and this appears on the inside cover.

The lead article in this month's *News* is on "The Rediscovery and Exploration of Pautler Cave" by Philip Moss, Lea Claycomb, Tony Schmitt, and Joe Sikorski. Pautler is located in Illinois just over the river from St. Louis. Back in 1968 the entrance had been bulldozed shut, and by the 1980's no one seemed to remember where the cave entrance had been. In 1996 a group of volunteers were investigating a sinkhole for use in a dye trace when a young boy on a bicycle rode up and asked what they were doing. When told they were looking for large cave, he invited them to check out "his cave." After awhile they agreed to follow the boy to his place, where his father showed the crew a nice, spiral, free-climbable pit. The cavers began poking at the hole, and Philip Moss eventually rappelled through the slot into dry, walking passage. In 1997 Jean (Creature) Krecja helped collect amphipods from the streambed found underlying the dry passage. By 1998 leads had been pushed through over 1000 feet of crawl, and by 1999 the end was in sight. There was a breakdown pile that blocked the downstream leg that had been previously deemed impassable. On the "last" trip into the cave one of the new guys on the project leaned against one of the breakdown pieces and it moved, and when scooted out of the way it revealed body-sized passage and the end of the restriction. When the "It Don't Go" was chipped open a few weeks later the explorers found large cave passage. Over the several years since then, the historic entrance of Pautler Cave has been purchased by the Karst Conservancy of Illinois, and joined to the rest of the cave through tight, nearly water-filled tunnels. Pautler now has 5.43 miles of mapped passage.

Next, Erin Lynch discusses "Big Passage in Zhangjiajie". She is a Virginia caver who caves with Brits while living in southern China. I met her while working with Pete Penczer diving the sump at West Virginia. In the article she describes finding, exploring, and mapping in Da Dong, literally translated as "Big Cave." The descriptions of the dimensions of this destination are daunting, the descending dimensions dubious, and the diving is deemed to be dismal due to the dirty debris deposited downstream.

"The Search for Tyrol Continues," according to Hilary Foulkes, with the quest for karst in the Loferer Steinberger in the Austrian Alps. In 2002 the Foulkes' team hit large horizontal passage about 600-700 meters below the mountain entrance. Their objective in 2004 was to find entrances to this lower level in the mountains of the Tyrol. One potential entrance, the Hafenloch, was located high up in a rocky cliff, and was deemed to be unexplorable at the time. "Cross Cave" (Kreuzhöhle), so named for the shape of the entrance, soon yielded serious vertical passage, but exploration was delayed due to lack of vertical gear. At the end of August the conditions faced by the team were 1° C temps and icy rain; the exploration continues.

Mark Aeder and Chuck Thorne relate adventures exploring among "Sea Cave Speleothems of Hawaii." Diving in Hawaii, simple island hydrology and marine life are other topics briefly covered. Dave Bunnell describes "Riko Riko Cave, New Zealand - World's Largest Sea Cave?" Dave was invited to view the cave by a dive boat operator who operates tours to Poor Knight's Islands off NZ's North Island. A surveying student was interested in determining the volume of Riko with the idea of comparison to other large sea caves. The accompanying photos illustrate (poorly) the immensity of the chamber, and this takes nothing away from the quality of the photography. The 3-D model is very cool as well.

This month the Spelean Spotlight focuses on Bill Elliott, former Texas caver and currently the official Cave Biologist for Missouri. He is quizzed on cave gates, bio-speleology, Inner Space Caverns, cave ecology transplantation, Texas Speleological Survey, taxonomic drawings, fire ants and their eco-friendly extermination, and the American Cave Conservation Association. "Small Town, Big Politics" by William Overton deals with the years-long effort on the part of cavers, their grotto, an NSS Conservation Task Force, and other involved citizens to prevent the city of Spencer, Tennessee from discharging treated sewage into a creek that feeds into the karst that contains Rumbling Falls and the potential for several other major caves.

In *News and Notes* it's reported that the Speleo-Club of Paris made Richard "Red" Watson an honorary member of what is the oldest caving club in the world. A team hoping to do the longest rappel in the world (estimated at 3200 feet) is collecting rope to give to the Inuit people of Canada as a gesture of good will. The government of Canada is unsure whether they will allow such expeditions in the future. Anmar Mirza explains some "Common Caving Mistakes" in his *Safety and Techniques* column, including running out of light, getting lost, getting stuck, inappropriate response to high water situations, and falling down.

In Bernie Szukalski's *Underground Update*, news of recently surveyed and mapped "lava tubes" in New England comes from *The Underground Movement* newsletter of the Central Connecticut Grotto. The Shasta (California) Area Grotto's *SAG Rag* details continuing exploration in Checkout Cave, first declared "finished" in the 1980's at 192 feet and now surveyed to around 2527

feet and going. In the Virginia Highlands Grotto *The Highlander* Ralph Hartley reports on progress made in Memorial Day Cave The team of Hartley, Pete Penczer, and Rick Royer passed the downward-sloping, body-sized, irregularly shaped tube obstacle, established an underground camp, and have recently added 1400 feet of new survey in 52 stations over a 46 hour trip. *The Explorer*, published by the Southern California Grotto, reports on Bronson Caverns, possibly the first cave that many cavers ever remember seeing, even if on TV. It was the "Bat Cave" on the 1960's "Batman" series, and is in reality an old mine in Griffith Park in LA. New cave mapper Rickey Shortt shows off his wares with "Bear Bones Cave" in *The Mudslinger* of the New River Valley Grotto.

Bobby Dodson reports in the *Birmingham Grotto Newsletter* on his rediscovery of an archaeological cave first described in the 1970's but never documented in the Alabama Cave Survey list. He details finding considerable cultural material in hard to reach areas of McCalla Cave. Terry Ragon discusses work in Garner Pit first begun back in the 70's, but stopped by an impassable crack followed by a 100-200 foot deep pit. After considerable effort to open the squeeze, a modern team found a drop of 60 feet. Sounds like another case of cave deflation. The *CIG Newsletter* of the Central Indiana Grotto calls Binkley's Cave a "biological treasure for the state of Indiana." Aaron Atz describes a cave 22 miles long and 150 feet deep, with a room 80 feet high and 200 by 80 feet wide. There are 74 different species of life documented in the cave, with 21 said to be of "significant global rarity".

The Oztotl Caver (DFW Grotto) May 2004 (Vol. 23 No. 5)

This issue kicks off with news of the TCMA fundraising project to purchase Deep and Punkin Caves. Bill Steele provides a brief narration of a recent trip he took to the Grand Canyon, river rafting and caves are discussed.

Speleospace May 2004 (Greater Houston Grotto)

No issue received this month.

COgnizance May 2004 (Central Oklahoma Grotto)

No trip reports, but a reprint of the Texas Sportsmen Liability Release Law is provided, as well as an "Update of the Endangered Species Act" including some info on the Tumbling Creek Cave snail, and a cleanup of its habitat in Missouri.

The Texas Caver (Texas Speleological Association) October 2003 (Vol. 49 No. 5)

Check out the covers: Mark Minton's nose (in Honey Creek) is on the front and Walt and Rae Nadler-Olenick's Subaru Brat's rear end is on the back. Inside, Susan Souby reports on the "Los Amigos de la Gruta" Bustamante 2003 cave restoration trip. We have recently been advised that there will be no such cleanup in 2004, the first Labor Day lapse in several years. As always, several memories were created at the project, among them the road machinery that blocked the road leading from the town to the cave and the fresh road surface that is still stuck to the rocker arms of many caving vehicles even today. Trail building in and outside the cave, graffiti removal, improvements to signage and lighting were among the tasks accomplished by the 114 cavers who signed up for the work. Afterwards, trips were arranged to the Birthday Passage in Palmito, Minas Golandrin, the Chiquihuitillos rock art site, and to the local mesal factory. The city of Bustamante hosted the cavers for a banquet in the city park pavilion. Anne Souby follows up with the "Bull Story," an attack by a fighting bull on a rented van that happened on the way to Minas Golandrin.

Lawrence Najjar reports on a pair of small caves he and Ky MacPherson found while hiking near Lake Belton. Marvin Miller describes the happenings at the November 2003 Powell's Cave Survey Project. Cindy Lee sent in a trip report about Little Arkansas in Hays County. Fern Bank Springs Cave is on the property and Cindy gives a brief synopsis of the exploration there. Noah Jaffey contributes an entertaining narrative of an outsider's introduction to Texas caving at the TCR held at Honey Creek. Marvin Miller reports on a Government Canyon Survey trip, and Rick Corbell's trip report from a 1991 Bindseils Well trip is printed. "Harrison Cave Visit" was contributed by Jim McLane, and describes a trip he and Donna Mosesmann made to the Sutton County cave on a trip arranged by Mike Walsh and the Texas Cave Conservancy (TCC). Linda Palit notes that members of the Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) have been "Movin' Dirt" down at Robber Baron cave in San Antonio. "Vertical Training Seminar" is the title and subject of a short article by Denise Prendergast dealing with events at Government Canyon. William Russell pitches in a short bit on how the federal government acquired the power to set restrictions on land development in order to protect cave species (hint: it has to do with wheat farmers), and next kicks in some of "What Cavers Can Learn From NASA", as in the space administration.

NSS News (National Speleological Society) June 2004 (Vol. 62 No. 6)

In this dress-up June issue of the *News* the front cover wears Lechuguilla cave pearls. Check out the "scratchboard" shading of the TAG cave illustration on the inner cover. Lawrence Cohen leads off with the speculative article "Could There Be Caves In The Hindu Kush?", the massive mountains occupying the northeastern border area of Afghanistan. Cohen describes karst features including huge open-air rimstone dams holding back true lakes, but literary

documentation is sparse, and very little actual ridgewalking has been done. He wraps up by describing what would be necessary for the explorer itching to work in what is an area of obvious security risks.

In the *President's Message* Scott Fee announces that the NSS supports the efforts of cave conservancies in acquiring and managing caves, and the NSS will rename their own such properties as "Nature Preserves" to reflect the preservation of all aspects of the land. Bill Halliday describes "Progress In Cleaning Up Hawaii's Kaumana Cave" on the Big Island. And there was one Big Mess there before these guys got started if the photos can be believed. Dr. G.O. Graening details "Use of the Costa Rican Cave, Cueva del Tigré, as a Classroom for Cave Ecology and Conservation by the Organization for Tropical Studies." Graening is a biology professor at the U. of Arkansas, and guest instructor in biospeleology at a summer course in tropical biology sponsored by the above organization. A brief overview of the course, a short description of the cave and environs, the finished map produced by the team, and a bio-inventory and food chain analysis of the life identified in association with the cave is presented.

Halliday next joins up with Jay Swofford to argue that "Oregon Cave Should Be Returned to U.S. Forest Service Administration" and taken away from the National Park Service. Whoa, the political fur is gonna fly over this! The authors list the reasons they feel the Park Service has mismanaged the cave. Benjamin von Cramon contributes a stimulating cave photography article. "Casting New Light on Cave Photography" presents unconventional views on "reality" in the mechanical (chemical or digital) capture of underground images. Consider his discussion of "conventional" versus "natural" cave photography, and his succinct observation that the most unnatural aspect (strictly, literally speaking) of cave photography is the use of light. I enjoyed reading the article (three times), and look forward to trying some of the techniques he discusses. Dave Bunnell, keen photographer in his own right, adds a short article on "When the 'Perfect' Picture Requires Taking Two."

The Spelean Spotlight blinds Buddy Lane this month. Oops, bad pun. If you read the interview you will find that Buddy actually lost an eye as a result of a bolting accident. He is, probably as much as anyone else, responsible for the formation and success of the Southeast Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCI), which acquires and manages property containing caves throughout that region of the country. He discusses his involvement in SCCI, cave rescue, and the early days of exploration in Lechuguilla. Warren Lewis asks, "Is Cave Saltpeter formed of Airborne Ammonia from Plants?" The problem of the genesis of saltpeter deposits has been discussed in certain circles from time to time, usually relying on bat or bird guano as the principal source. This theory does not explain deposits found miles from an entrance and containing no trace of the suspected animals. Lewis proposes air transport of ammonia as the principal source, and presents a succinct and non-technical discussion of his ideas of the mechanism responsible for its deposition and transformation into saltpeter deposits. The author is quick to point out that his idea is a hypothesis and will require experimental testing before it can be accepted as the likely explanation.

In the *Letters* section Bob Montgomery, manager of the Great Expectations Cave Nature Preserve, criticizes BOG candidate Joe Levinson's suggestions that more rigid guidelines on cave purchase contracts be instituted. Notice at the bottom of the page, unrelated to the politics, 50% of the \$200,000 needed to purchase Great X has been pledged.

In *Society News* Joel Despain asks cavers to "Help Support the International Exploration Fund Endowment". As chair of the NSS International Exploration Committee, Despain is very interested in seeing the endowment grow. At this time, the fund has \$10,000, including a significant portion contributed by the Joe Ivy Fund, administered by Becky Jones of GGG. The Gunung Buda Project will add \$3000 more from the sales of their new book "Caves of Gunung Buda 2000." In *News and Notes* Jay Jorden's friend Chris Nicola announces the annual Ukrainian American Youth Caver Exchange Foundation (UAYCEF) trip to the gypsum caves of western Ukraine and the deep limestone caves of the Crimea. Gary Soule reports that an "Extraordinary" Cave has been found in Arizona that "Rivals Karchner Caverns". The cave is reported to be in Colossal Cave Mountain Park and contains wondrous formations, all in a very humid environment. NCKRI in Carlsbad announces the appointment of Dr. Thomas Strong, Ph.D. as Visiting Chief Scientist. Dr. Strong's strong points are in cave science research, biology, and resource management.

Underground Update starts out by covering the 4000th reported cave in Virginia, this from the *Pine Mountain Fault* of the Pine Mountain Grotto. The *Potomac Caver* features Memorial Day Cave again, this time with a cover photo by Mark Stover featuring Lewis Carroll and Ralph Hartley in a caver camp past the obstruction. Andrea Hunter authors a report covering herself, Carroll, Stover, and Bill Stone pushing farther into the northeast of the cave, lots of pits, climbs, and more passage past each bolted lead! Pete Penczler contributes a timeline of recent trips, including the 46-hour marathon yielding 1400 feet surveyed in 52 stations. The cave has grown from 1.6 miles to 4 miles in the year leading up to February 2004. Kimble Pit is reported as blowing "huge air," but the source remains a mystery blocked by at least 6 feet of digging...maybe. The *Karst Chronicle* published by the Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy contains articles by editor Kim Metzgar on the Trout Run Woods Cave Preserve in Pennsylvania, and Tom Metzgar focuses on Copperhead Cave, discovered in 1940 and explored by the Cleveland Grotto since the 1950's. Dan Austin relates tales of exploration in *The Carbide Flash* from the Paha Sapa Grotto. Carroll Cave in Missouri has a very impressive entrance, but was not seriously explored until Kansas City Area Grotto cavers began a survey in the 1950's that totaled 3 miles. The grotto helped the landowner erect a gate, but this was used to keep cavers out, and clandestine trips became the only way to continue mapping. In 1999 KC cavers arranged with

a landowner above the cave to construct a new entrance 120 feet down into a major junction. Side leads are now getting mapped, and are adding an average of 10,000 feet per lead. At this rate one might calculate a cave of 200 miles in surveyed length, but a conservative thinking Austin is estimating 70 miles, enough to displace Crevice Cave as the longest in the "Show-Me-Cave" State.

Small caves are covered in the *Intercom* of the Iowa Grotto, and larger caves in the February, 2004 *Virginia Cellars* of the Virginia Speleological Survey. Battered Bar Cave started out as a no-go pit dig, but is closing in on 6830 feet in length and 390 feet deep. Breathing Cave is being charted by the Gangsta Mappers and is up to 6.16 miles. Flannery Cave now has a published map after a ten-year intermission in exploration. *The Subterranean Voice* of the St. Joseph Valley Grotto (Indiana) carries tidings of the discovery and survey of Butler Cave, found by a new grotto member on his land. In Virginia, The Highlands Grotto's voice, *The Highlander*, reports on Rick Lambert's mapping efforts in the area. Addie Jane's Cave was once a hideout during the South's Second War for Independence; Gentry Cave has a similar history, and Rt. 644 Cave was spotted as a hole along the highway.

The Best is usually left for last, and *The Maverick Bull* holds that distinction this month. In the March edition Mark Gee, Kurt and Kitty Menking, and Joe Ranzau traveled 534 miles out to far-West Texas to see about some caves in the same mountain range as Carlsbad. In April, Melissa Marzahn and Kristofer Megahan are featured on the cover in a Butch Fralia photo, and an article by Jerry Atkinson on the growing sink at Wink, Texas list some impressive proportions.

A new feature for the *News* is *Speleomedia*, written by Van Bergen, keyboardist for the Terminal Syphons. No doubt future editions will include a review of the recordings made of Barb MacLeod. A CD by Dangerous Dick and the Duckbusters called *In too Deep*, subtitled *Songs of Caves, Cavers, and Caving* is featured this month. This trio is from western Canada, and the music is described as a tasty combination of celtic, bluegrass, and sea-shanty influences. The lyrics sound witty, with a recurring theme of submerging into the ground only to feel the need to resurface as the beer siren sounds. The cost is \$15.00 CA plus shipping, and proceeds benefit the Canadian Cave Conservancy.

Bill Mixon reviews the *Field Guide to Caves and Karst of Guam* by Danko Taborosi, a "genuine guidebook to caves, an increasingly rare thing." Bill likes it, so go buy it, even though "the book's specialized subject will clearly limit its appeal." Paul Steward likes Patricia Quinlan's *Beneath Their Feet: A Novel About Mammoth Cave and Its People.* *Bat Ecology* is a serious academic tome (University of Chicago Press) edited by Thomas H. Kunz and M. Brock Fenton. Reviewer Danny A. Brass calls this "the most comprehensive, up-to-date review of the interactions of bat and environment that has been published in the last twenty years." This book is a serious text that may be over the heads of readers not well versed already on bat biology.

The Oztotl Caver (DFW Grotto) June 2004 (Vol. 23 No. 6)

This *Oztotl* starts off with a reprint of an article that originally appeared in the *Houston Chronicle* about former Texas first lady Nellie Connally attending a rededication ceremony at Natural Bridge Caverns, which was originally opened by her late husband John 40 years ago. Several of the early explorers were on hand as well. Is that Rasputin plotting the budget for the Romanovs? No, it is Terry Holsinger with his Treasurer's Report at the TSA business meeting at Burnet. Jay Jorden recounts a history of the TSA Land Fund, and reviews its current status. Photos include Bill Steele auctioning off various cave related and non-cave related items at the recent TSA Convention, proceeds benefiting the aforementioned fund. Sheila Knight reports on a trip she, Liam Jorden and Ginger (the cave dog) took to Florida where she visited Luda and Valeriy Regozhnikov, and Luda's sister, Larisa Shylovsky. The sisters were the Jorden-Knight's guides when they visited the Ukraine a few years back. The Regozhnikovs are now naturalized US citizens. Lastly, DFW Grotto is interviewing for the *Oztotl Caver* editor position, interested parties arrange interviews with Mike Pearson.

Speleospace (Greater Houston Grotto) June 2004

This month's cover is a full color view up into the forest canopy from a cave in Belize, photo by Denver Hopkins. After the caving calendar and member's address changes there are announcements of the annual TAG Fall Cave-In, which will not be held at Sequoyah Caverns, and that the GHG members and club together donated a total of \$690.00 to the Deep and Punkin Caves fund. Charles Shirley describes his first survey trip with members of the Bexar Grotto to T-Shirt Cave and Killer Frog Cave on a ranch out near Uvalde. Sid Formanek contributes what may be the shortest caving trip report ever published, someone should check into this! Mark Wagaman reports on a trip he made to a place in Banff called Cave and Basin. Past the Visitor's Center and inside the cave the paved path led to a thermal mineral pool reeking of sulfur. Nearby Mark found Canamore Caverns in Grotto Mountain advertised, but this was reserved as a backup plan in the event of bad weather, and the weather was perfect, so the preferred plan for mountain hiking won out. Mark and Susan Bigham together contributed a report on the June 2004 Kickapoo Caverns Project. Great newsletter again Emily!

COGNizance (Central Oklahoma Grotto) June 2004

Always trip reports in this newsletter it seems... first, Lil Town records the events of an excursion back to Cattle Cave, in the northwest of the state. The COG editor reprinted the Jester Cave trip report appearing in the May edition of the *Maverick Bull*. Grotto Laureate General Steve Beleu contributed only one poem (prosaically entitled "Bat") but made up for that paucity by

including sheet music for his composition "Gypsum Caving Bagatelles – 14" for piano.

The Texas Caver (Texas Speleological Association) December 2003 (Vol. 49 No. 6)

Lawrence Najjar leads off with a description of the 26th TAG Fall Cave-In at Sequoyah Caverns. George Veni warn us that "The End Is Near" of the regularly scheduled rock-hauling trips to clean out Devil's Pit in Caverns of Sonora. The tons of debris dumped down that hole during commercial development of the cave have almost been carried up and away, so the focus on future trips will most likely shift to other areas. Jay Jorden writes of Ukrainian caver "Tanya" Yermakova's visit to the U.S. as sponsored guest of the Ukrainian American Youth Caver Exchange Foundation and cavers throughout the US, including Jay Jorden, Sheila Knight, and Dave McClung in Texas. Joe and Evelyn Mitchell and Melissa Long write of their adventures caving in Arizona, where they visited newly opened Kartchner Caverns and an Arizona "sacrificial cave", Sphinx Cave. Marvin Miller contributes a report on the December 2003 Government Canyon Survey trip, and Jim Kennedy dug up a trip report from 2000 of an excursion out to West Kerr Bat Cave. Mike Walsh and Jerry Fant describe work involving cricket counts in Williamson County. Minutes of the TSA Winter BOG meeting are included, followed by a proposed TSA constitutional amendment, and a request for more dinero to aid in cave acquisition efforts by Linda Palit of the Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA).

* If members of other NSS grottos and caving clubs come across this newsletter, they should encourage their newsletter editor to contact the *Maverick Bull* about the possibility of a newsletter exchange.

New AMCS Publications

The Association for Mexican Cave Studies announces two new publications: Bulletin 14, *Karst Hydrology of the Sierra de El Abra, Mexico*, by John Fish, with a new foreword by Derek Ford. 8.5 by 11 inches, 186 pages, 82 drawn figures (including 26 cave maps), 47 photos, softbound. Eight of the figures are foldouts. This major work on an area with some of the largest karst springs in the world, as well as numerous notable caves, was a 1977 Ph.D. dissertation. The work was not published, and the material printed here, in newly typeset form, has been almost inaccessible. \$25.

AMCS Activities Newsletter 27, edited by Bill Mixon. May 2004. 8.5 by 11 inches, 100 pages: 22 pages of "Mexico News," long and deep cave lists, 16 articles. 45 cave maps, including 2 foldouts. Softbound \$18, hardbound (limited supply) \$28.

Order with check or money order (in U.S. dollars on U.S. bank) from AMCS, P.O. Box 7672, Austin, Texas 78713. PayPal orders may be placed from our web site www.amcs-pubs.org, where details, including tables of contents, on these and other AMCS publications may be found. Postage charge \$3 first book, \$1 each additional to U.S.; \$6, \$2 surface mail elsewhere. If you do not order a hardbound #27 promptly, check availability with sales@amcs-pubs.org before paying. – Bill Mixon, AMCS Sales

Cascade Caverns Under New Management

Cascade Caverns Park is now under new management. Currently, we are making many improvements and modifications at all levels. It is our intention to be responsible stewards of the cave from a conservation viewpoint, and to provide a wholesome experience for all visitors, whether they be individuals or families.

The show cave portion of the tour will remain the same, at least in the short run.

Wild cave tours will begin sometime during July. We are first considering a number of factors, including which entrance to use, safety, etc. Interested persons may speak to Brandon.

Brandon Kuhn
Manager, Cascade Caverns Park
(830) 755-8080

Cover Photo Identification

Clockwise from upper left-hand corner: R.D. Milhollin, speaker; TCMA auction, Bill Steele, auctioneer; Butch Fralia, videographer; Terry and Mercy Raines and family; Rodolfo "Fofu" Gonzalez, speaker; Joe Pearce and his wife (Joe was the oldest caver in attendance); Wes Schumacher makes it through the squeeze box; Jean Krejca, speaker; David Locklear, asleep in the campground at Longhorn Cavern. Center, from top to bottom: Gonzo Guano Gear sales booth; Barb MacLeod and Pete Strickland sing "Histoplasmosis."

Many thanks to Charles Fromén of the Greater Houston Grotto for supplying the photos from the 2004 TSA Convention!

TSS Open House & Strickland Pond Party, Austin, June 26, 2004

Diana Tomchick

The open house hosted by Texas Speleological Survey at their offices on the University of Texas-Austin Pickle Research Campus was well attended despite the all-too frequent rain showers that punctuated the day. Around 20-25 cavers showed up at the event that lasted from 10 a.m. to about 4 p.m., whereupon most folks drove to Pete and Jocie Strickland's place to attend their annual Pond Party.

The Open House would give Bill Steele and myself a chance to rummage through the TSS cave files and find information about caves in the gypsum plain of northwest Texas, and some of interest out in west Texas, so we headed out of the Metroplex on Saturday morning and arrived about an hour after things started. We were greeted by a group of Austin area caver-cooks (including Gary Napper) who were stationed outside the building grilling meat and doing their best to stay dry. Around 1 p.m. we were treated to wonderful chicken and steak fajitas, beans and rice, salad and some very tasty green salsa.

Inside the offices TSS Director Jim Kennedy was giving the usual tours of the facilities to visitors and assisting with questions about the cave information database. People showed up throughout the day, some for only an hour or so and others, such as Bill and myself stayed until the offices closed. Former Metroplex caver Dave "Cave" McClung stopped by and brought Jay Jorden with him, just in time for lunch. Sheila Knight and their son Liam would meet us at the Strickland party in the evening.

Some unexpected and interesting events occurred during the Open House. Carl Kunath was displaying 1970's era photos from caver parties and events on his laptop and soliciting recommendations on whether they were suitable for his *Fifty Years of Texas Caving* book. The general consensus seemed to be that photos with excessive nudity were not suitable for a target audience that includes public school libraries (one would think from his photos that the Carta Valley S.U.C.K.S. group only wore clothes underground). Later Carl initiated a vigorous discussion with William Russell and Orion Knox over a preliminary list of "100 Most Influential Texas Cavers." William could repeatedly be heard saying, "sure, he was active, but for a short time, he turned out to be a flash in the pan," and "whatever happened to him?" Eventually Jay and I lobbied Carl to include David Locklear in the list. As Jay said, "he IS influential on CaveTex," but I could tell from the look on Carl's face that he was not amused.

Logan McNatt was hard at work collecting information on what would be needed to scan back issues of the *Texas Caver* in order to create PDFs. Approximately one-third of the back issues are out of print and thus not readily available to TSA members. The issues from the 1950's are especially fragile, as they were mimeographed on paper that was not acid-free. Eventually Carl and Orion took Logan to the Austin Fry's Electronics store to look for a suitable digital scanner so he could get started on the project at his house.

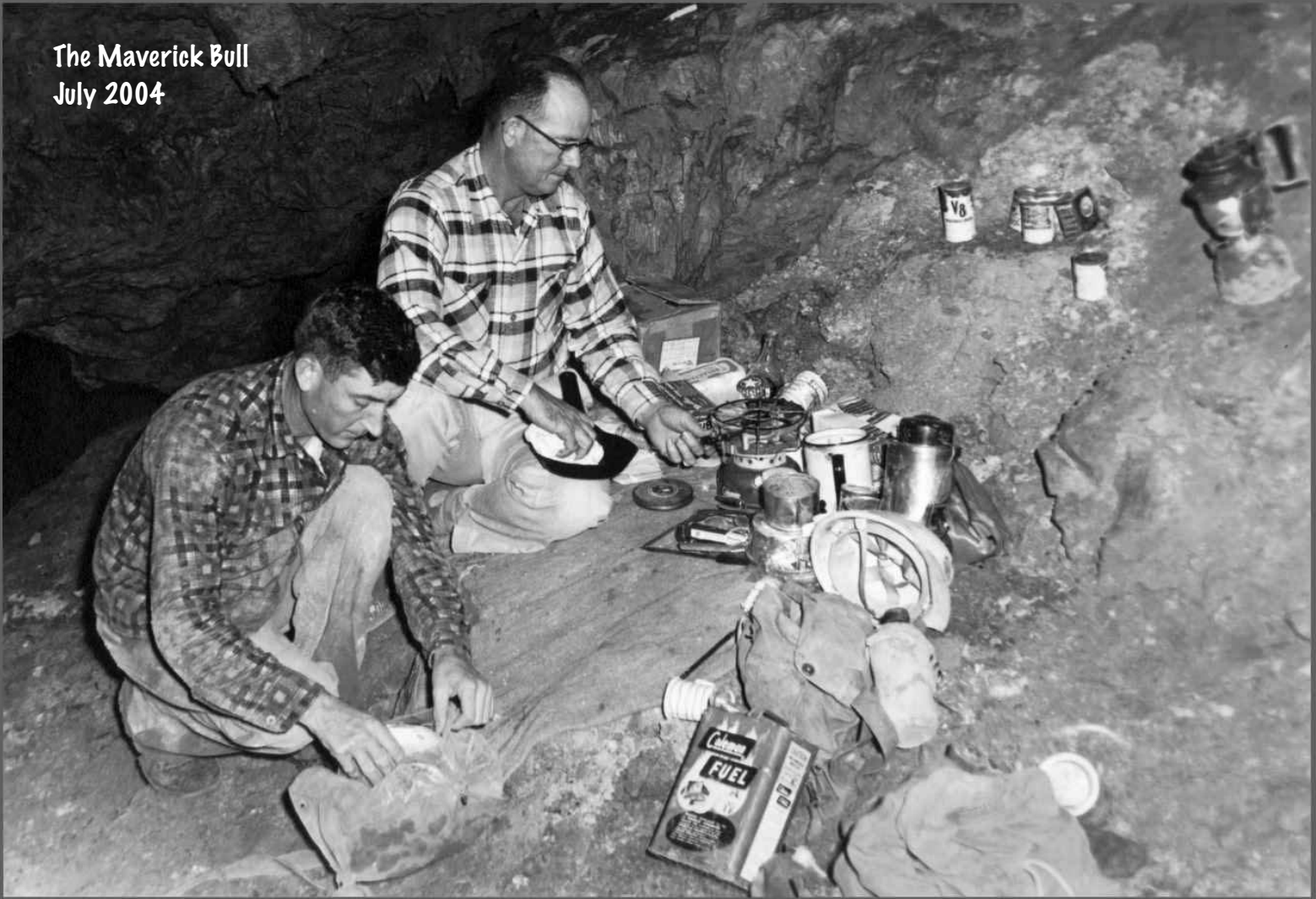
One thing that surprised us during this visit was the kinds of information that the TSS has accumulated in their office and as part of their museum. Jerry Atkinson and Jim Kennedy brought out the original Texas Cave Survey files, which consisted of a single index card per cave. On most of these was simply the name of the cave and the county location, though some included sketch maps (on a 3" x 5" card!) and other data. This set of index cards was used during the preparation of the first TSS cave bulletin.

Bill noticed a box of material on a filing cabinet labelled "Jack Burch Oklahoma archives" and pulled it down for a look. This is the same Jack Burch of Caverns of Sonora (Mayfield Cave) fame. The TSS is storing this material until the time that an Oklahoma Speleological Survey is formed. A quick perusal of the contents indicated that most items were dated 1958 and 1959. Included were original survey notes, sketch maps, and tons of old black and white photos. Many of these photos list the cave names and dates on the back, and little else, while others have no identifying notes. One gem we discovered was the photo reproduced on the back cover of this newsletter. On the back of the 8" x 10" original is written "Cottonwood Cave, 1960," which of course refers to the Cottonwood Cave in Oklahoma. On the left is Jack Burch, and the fellow on the right has been tentatively identified (by Oklahoma caver Andy Harris) as Ollie Testerman. In the box is one of Jack's preliminary sketch maps of Cottonwood, where the location of a cave camp is clearly indicated; presumably that corresponds to this photo.

Around 5 p.m. we arrived at the Strickland property (Bill dubbed it "Stricklandia," as Pete's parents and two brothers also live there) and joined in the festivities. I would guess that perhaps 50 or more people attended the party, and I finally got to meet Pete's brothers. They give a whole new meaning to the term "science nerd" (I consider myself to be a bit of an expert on this topic, due to my 20+ years of experience in academic science). Though there were several torrential downpours, Pete had planned well and covered all the tables and barbecue grill with tarps so we were comfortably dry if we chose to be. Eventually the rain stopped, the sun came out, and a rainbow could be seen from the top of the Strickland dam. It's hard to imagine a more delightful place for a swim!

Most people eventually made their way home by 2 a.m., but for those folks who had farther to travel than the Austin area, a comfortable camping area was provided. A swim the next morning capped off a delightful weekend spent in the company of cavers.

The Maverick Bull
July 2004



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